



7555-01-P

NATIONAL SCIENCE FOUNDATION

Agency Information Collection Activities: Comment Request; Generic Clearance of the National Center for Science and Engineering Statistics Improvement Projects

AGENCY: National Science Foundation.

ACTION: Notice.

SUMMARY: The National Science Foundation (NSF) is announcing plans to renew this collection. In accordance with the requirements of the Paperwork Reduction Act of 1995, we are providing opportunity for public comment on this action. After obtaining and considering public comment, NSF will prepare the submission requesting Office of Management and Budget (OMB) clearance of this collection for no longer than 3 years.

DATES: Written comments on this notice must be received by [INSERT DATE 60 DAYS AFTER PUBLICATION IN THE FEDERAL REGISTER] to be assured consideration. Comments received after that date will be considered to the extent practicable. Send comments to address below.

FOR FURTHER INFORMATION CONTACT: Suzanne H. Plimpton, Reports Clearance Officer, National Science Foundation, 2415 Eisenhower Avenue, Suite W18200, Alexandria, Virginia 22314; telephone (703) 292-7556; or send email to splimpto@nsf.gov. Individuals who use a telecommunications device for the deaf (TDD) may call the Federal Information Relay Service (FIRS) at 1-800-877-8339, which is accessible 24 hours a day, 7 days a week, 365 days a year (including Federal holidays).

SUPPLEMENTARY INFORMATION:

Title of Collection: Generic Clearance of the National Center for Science and Engineering Statistics Improvement Projects.

OMB Control Number: 3145-0174.

Expiration Date of Current Approval: July 31, 2019.

Type of Request: Intent to seek approval to extend an information collection for three years.

Abstract. Established within the National Science Foundation by the America COMPETES Reauthorization Act of 2010 § 505, codified in the National Science Foundation Act of 1950, as amended, the National Center for Science and Engineering Statistics (NCSES) – one of 13 principal federal statistical agencies – serves as a central Federal clearinghouse for the collection, interpretation, analysis, and dissemination of objective data on science, engineering, technology, research and development for use by practitioners, researchers, policymakers, and the public. NCSES conducts about a dozen nationally-representative surveys to obtain the data for these purposes. The Generic Clearance will be used to ensure that the highest quality data are obtained from these surveys. State of the art methodology will be used to develop, evaluate, and test questionnaires and survey concepts as well as to improve survey and statistical methodology. This may include field or pilot tests of questions for future large-scale surveys, as needed. The Generic Clearance will also be used to test and evaluate data dissemination tools and methods, in an effort to improve access for data users.

Use of the Information. The purpose of these studies is to use the latest and most appropriate methodology to improve NCSES surveys, evaluate new data collection efforts, and evaluate data dissemination tools and mechanisms.

Methodological findings may be presented externally in technical papers at conferences, published in the proceedings of conferences, or in journals. Improved NCSES surveys, data collections, and data dissemination will help policymakers in decisions on research and development funding, graduate education, and the scientific and engineering workforce, as well as contributing to reduced survey costs.

Expected Respondents. The respondents will be from industry, academia, nonprofit organizations, members of the public, and State, local, and Federal governments. Respondents will be either individuals or institutions, depending on the topic under investigation. Qualitative procedures will generally be conducted in person, online (using Skype, Webex, or other conferencing tools), or over the phone. Quantitative procedures may be conducted using mail, Web, email, or phone modes, depending on the topic under investigation. Up to 7,595 respondents will be contacted across all projects. No respondent will be contacted more than twice in one year under this generic clearance. Every effort will be made to use technology to limit the burden on respondents from small entities.

Both qualitative and quantitative methods will be used to improve NCSES's current data collection instruments and processes and to reduce respondent burden, as well as to develop new surveys and new or improved data dissemination tools. Qualitative and quantitative methods that may be used include, but are not limited, to the following: behavior coding, split panel tests, field tests, expert reviews, focus groups, respondent debriefings, exploratory

interviews, cognitive interviews, and usability tests. Cognitive interviews and usability tests may include the use of scenarios, paraphrasing, card sorts, vignette classifications, and rating tasks. NCSES may conduct these studies using interviewer-administered or self-administered methods, including online convenience samples.

Estimate of Burden. NCSES estimates that a total reporting and recordkeeping burden of 15,610 hours will result from activities to improve its surveys. The calculation is shown in Table 1.

Table 1. Potential surveys for improvement projects, with the number of respondents and burden hours.

	Number of Respondents	Number of Hours
Early Career Doctorate Survey	500	500
Survey of Earned Doctorates	1,200	600
Other surveys of the science and engineering workforce	1,600	450
Higher Education Research & Development Survey	300	500
Federally Funded Research & Development Centers (FFRDC) Survey	60	120
Federal Labs Survey (possible future survey)	275	525
State Government Research &	150	225

Development Survey

Survey of Nonprofit Research Activities	225	550
Business Research & Development Survey	50	150
Annual Business Survey	300	450
Survey of Scientific & Engineering Facilities	300	300
Public Understanding of Science & Engineering Survey	550	125
Data dissemination tools and mechanisms	100	100
Other surveys and projects not specified	10,000	3,000
Total	15,610	7,595

Dated: March 7, 2019.

Suzanne H. Plimpton,

Reports Clearance Officer,

National Science Foundation.

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